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AMERICANIZED ENGLISHMEN.

DURING the past year, several thousands of Englishmen, who had long resided in the United States without renouncing allegiance to the Crown, have formally assumed the duties and responsibilities of American citizenship; and the movement is still gathering force. Its significance is not to be questioned. Unlike the Irish, who look upon this country as a natural haven from the ills of poverty and coercion, and the Germans, who are eager to embrace an opportunity of escaping, for good and all, from an irksome military régime, it is probable that but few of these Englishmen came here intending to stay. For, in spite of free trade and low wages, England is still a pleasant land to live in; the prospect of a career lies open to the clever and enterprising, and the popular love of the soil is strong. It is, therefore, no uncertain testimony to the attractiveness of American institutions that they should have led these cautious Britons permanently to expatriate themselves. Their action argues no thoughtless abandonment of ancient traditions. On the contrary, they have served a long apprenticeship to Republicanism, being slow to embrace new beliefs, and their education has been gradual but none the less complete; and in now evincing a desire to show what good Democrats they can become, they enjoy the best of all possible qualifications—an enlightened interest in American life and progress, gained from actual residence in the country, and a just appreciation of the forces which direct them.

Yet it is doubtful whether anybody entertains a profounder contempt for these United States than the newly-landed Briton whom curiosity or the want of work has driven across the ocean. The insinuation that he could ever become a “renegade” would evoke his bitterest scorn. He is willing to make as much money as he can and get home again as soon as possible; and while he

remains, nobody is so loyal to his prejudices, or so bent on resisting what the Father of his Country called the "insidious wiles of foreign influence." Every novelty in his surroundings, every apparent eccentricity in the conduct of the people, he accepts as a corroboration of the antique libels which have passed current in England as "the truth about America" since the days of Martin Chuzzlewit; and the fortunate friend at home to whom he unburdens his mind in his letters learns to look upon this benighted land as the stamping ground of a race of mild barbarians, strongly addicted to the whittling of pine sticks and the mastication of bad tobacco, whose favorite expletives are "I swan!" and "gol darn it!" and who never miss an opportunity to declare their ability to "lick creation."

He is scandalized to discover the ease and want of ceremony in social and business intercourse, and, unless he happens to be a prize-fighter or prize-preacher, is puzzled to understand why there should be nobody eager to kowtow to him;—more extraordinary still, why there should be nobody eager to be kowtowed to. In the offensive familiarity and independence of menials, who have actually the effrontery to call their souls their own, he reads symptoms of the true tyranny of democracy, and the sight of so many common people enjoying a condition of "beastly prosperity" is apt to interfere with his own enjoyment of life. The blunt plain-speaking of the newspapers in calling sinners to repentance impresses him as an undue interference with the "sanctities of private life." The "exposures" of crooked politicians and financiers he, of course, accepts as the inevitable result of a vicious social and governmental system, though he thanks his stars that no such revelations are ever necessary in *his* moral country! The army and the navy excite his ridicule. Britannia still rules the waves, and he rejoices that he comes not of a race which takes more interest in railroads and stock-yards and the tariff on glass-ware and "dress-improvers" than in the attitude of Holy Russia or the complications with the sublime Porte. The unfinished look of the country, the snake fences, the rough, unpainted barns and wooden farm-houses, offend his sense of the picturesque. He misses the cool green lanes and pleasant hedgerows and massy minsters and ivy-covered ruins that adorn the face of rural England. He agrees with Ruskin that there can be but little of virtue in a land which has no castles. And then the courts!

How can he wonder that divorces are common in Chicago, that anarchists hatch their plots undisturbed, that wealthy criminals purchase acquittal, and that "necktie parties" are not unknown in Arkansas and Alabama, when he sees that the forms of the law are shamefully neglected—the association in his mind between the form and the substance being so intimate that he is unable to perceive how one can exist without the other? In place of the solemn circumstance with which the operations of the law are invested in Great Britain, he observes in the American courts an utter absence of the conventional paraphernalia. No coats-of-arms, no tipstaves, no maces, no euphuistic circumlocution in the bouts of contending counsel; judges without ermine, barristers without wigs, ushers without gowns—it is evident these Americans have not yet learned how to live! Their restless energy, their abruptness, their ready and racy speech all irritate him. He is indignant at their want of respect for age, indignant at their persistent practicality, indignant, even, at the wit and satire of their pretty women; and his heart warms towards the glorious old Union Jack as he piously thanks Heaven he was born in a country where other orders reign!

Unless circumstances prevent, he probably shakes the dust of the New World from his feet at the first convenient opportunity, and retires in disgust to the happy land where present evils are condoned and future ones provided for in the name of a romantic past, and, if he does not forthwith perpetrate a book vehemently denouncing this hemisphere and all it contains, is pretty sure to set up as an ardent tory and avowed enemy of Republicanism, hostile from knowledge and implacable from experience. If he does not so return, the chances are that his stay is made under protest, accompanied with much chafing at the restraints which bar him from "civilization," and with the active exercise of John Bull's inalienable right to grumble.

But in time, and by slow degrees, he begins to perceive that the essentials of civilization are here and have been here for some time, even if some of its refinements and elegancies are still lacking. It gradually dawns upon his mediæval intellect that there is some reason in the belief that nine-tenths of the world were not created to be patronized by the other tenth. He is weaned from his petulant hankering after universal homage and his consuming passion for salaams and self-abasement. The superstitious idea

that a title, a ribbon, or a star can endow frail humanity with strengths and dignities that nature withheld, loosens its hold upon his mind. So also do the fatuous delusions that selfish conservatism and exclusiveness are compatible with manly courtesy ; that it is a virtue to be the son of one's father ; that starch and buckram are things to be loved for themselves ; and he learns that true knightliness is consistent even with saw-milling and the handling of grain, and that an Illinois log-cabin may be the home of rarer worth and more genuine greatness than a feudal fortress with two round towers and a moat.

It is because they have learned these truths and because they respect the spirit which battles for them, that so many Englishmen are "declaring their intentions." They have not been led away by the rhetorical twaddle of weak-minded sentimentalists. As their observation has extended, they have found that the blemishes they at first discovered were but as spots on the sun. They have come to the belief that august traditions and splendid memories may be but other names for rapacity and intolerance. The Americans, they see, are an eminently practical people, who have too little leisure for indulgence in schoolboy rivalries and too much intelligence for insisting on distinctions which arbitrarily divide mankind, and exist only that some may enjoy more than their lawful share of power and possession. They see that Jefferson's "aristocracy of virtue and talent" is the real aristocracy which it is an honor to adorn. Their hearts have ceased to yearn for the precious privilege of contributing to the pampering of a growing horde of royal ninies, while a homeless and famine-stricken crowd huddles at night for refuge on the cold stones of Trafalgar square, uncared for and despised, in the very shadow of the palaces where riot reigns. The hoary institution of primogeniture no longer commands their awe. Their good sense rebels against the meek rendering of tithes, that fat prelates may wax fatter by violating the simple tenets of their faith. They are ready to believe that the world is getting beyond the point where the fostering of the spirit of feudalism and the building up of a stupendous military armament are the most praiseworthy objects of the life of a great nation ; and they are even recreant enough to hear without dissatisfaction of the result of an unjust war against the Boers and of the gradual success of the Irish in their struggle for self-government.

Whoso asserts that these transmuted Britons can be organized as a political force against any other body of citizens surely reckons without his host. They seek to help the Union, not to hinder it. They know that all is not perfection. They recognize the need for electoral reform, the necessity of measures for checking mob-rule and for neutralizing the power of unscrupulous corporations. But they know enough to cast their votes on the side of honest government and to look askant at bossism and the machine. And of one thing they are sure—that the nation which transformed itself into an army to fight for principle and not for profit, and peaceably disbanded when the occasion for their services had passed, which sent out the flower of its youth to be martyred for the sake of a degraded negro and then magnanimously extended a universal amnesty to those who betrayed its flag, is a nation capable of the purest patriotism, the sublimest self-denial, and the most heroic sacrifices in the name of justice and truth.

ERNEST LAMBERT.